

“Marks of a True Leader,” Part 1 - 2 Corinthians 11:1-6 – February 5th, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part one of a series I've titled, "Marks of a True Leader."
- What we're about to see is a very blunt Apostle Paul rebuking the Corinthian church for tolerating false teachers and leaders.
- In so doing, Paul will sort of rise from the pages of this chapter as an example to us of what a true and godly leader looks like.

1. They are protective of the flock (Verses 1-3)

- v1 Paul tells them that he hopes they will put up with him in a little foolishness, then sort of asks them to please put up with him.
- v2 He says he's jealous for them with a godly jealousy and he's promised them to one husband, Christ as a pure virgin to Him.
- v3 He says he fears that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent, their minds may be led astray from pure devotion to Christ.

- In order to better understand what Paul is saying here, one must know a little of the Middle Eastern customs back in that day.
- In the Jewish and even the Arab culture, the father is responsible to ensure his daughters virginity prior to her wedding day.
- This because, he and his entire family, not to mention the bride herself, would be unspeakably shamed were she not a virgin.

- What Paul is saying here is he wants to protect them from those who would seduce them away from the purity of the gospel.
- It seems false teachers, who were very much alive and well in that day, were seducing Christians to commit spiritual adultery.
- In other words, just as a father protects his bride-to-be from impurity, so too is the Apostle Paul protecting the bride of Christ.

- It's for this reason that Paul says he is jealous for them with a godly jealousy in promising them to Christ as a pure virgin bride.
- This is what I absolutely love about the Apostle Paul. He has the heart of a father who ferociously protects the bride of Christ.
- It's important to understand what Paul is not saying concerning his godly jealousy for them, such that he's not jealous of them.

Alan Redpath, "God's jealousy, ...is a concern for the holiness, integrity, purity of ethics, and Christian standards for His people. ...not because of a selfish greed which wishes us all for His own possession, but simply because He knows that His great purpose for us of purity and holiness of life depends on our personal surrender and submission to His purpose."

2. They are not about showmanship (Verses 4-6)

- v4 Paul warns them about tolerating those who preach a different Jesus, and receiving a different spirit, from a different gospel.
- v5 He very boldly and bluntly tells them that he doesn't think he's the least bit inferior to those who they saw as "super-apostles."
- v6 He says while he may be an untrained and unskilled speaker, he possesses knowledge, he's made perfectly clear to them.

- What Paul says here is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is he didn't care what people thought of him.
- I would suggest that he didn't care whether or not people liked him, which is why he didn't make it about his own showmanship.
- Paul wasn't concerned about what they thought about him, but he was really concerned that they knew the truth of the gospel.

Galatians 1:8–9 (NIV) — 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

- The common denominator between the churches in Galatia, and the church in Corinth was they had persuasive false teachers.
- And, these false teachers were preaching a false gospel, and with it a false Jesus and these Christians were putting up with it.
- Not only were they putting up with it easily enough they were accepting it as well due in large part to how captivating they were.

There's a story that's told of a Shakespearean actor who was known everywhere for his one-man shows of readings and recitations from the classics. He would always end his performance with a dramatic reading of Psalm 23. Each night, without exception, as the actor began his recitation - "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want". The crowd would listen attentively. And then, at the conclusion of the Psalm, they would rise in thunderous applause in appreciation of the actor's incredible ability to bring the verse to life. But one night, just before the actor was to offer his customary recital of Psalm 23, a young man from the audience spoke up. "Sir, do you mind if tonight I recite Psalm 23?" The actor was quite taken back by this unusual request, but he allowed the young man to come forward and stand front and center on the stage to recite the Psalm, knowing that the ability of this unskilled youth would be no match for his own talent. With a soft voice, the young man began to recite the words of the Psalm. When he was finished, there was no applause. There was no standing ovation as on other nights. All that could be heard was the sound of weeping. The audience had been so moved by the young man's recitation that every eye was full of tears. Amazed by what he had heard, the actor said to the youth, "I don't understand. I have been performing Psalm 23 for years. I have a lifetime of experience and training - but I have never been able to move an audience as you have tonight. Tell me, what is your secret?" The young man quietly replied, "Well sir, you know the Psalm... I know the Shepherd."

- Please know that I'm in no way suggesting that the preaching of the gospel, or the teaching of God's Word should be boring.
- I'm personally of the belief that to do so is to almost create the opposite dynamic, in the sense that it's met with a disinterest.
- Rather, what I am suggesting is that the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is known when the true Jesus is known and made known.

2 Timothy 4:2–4 (NIV) — 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.